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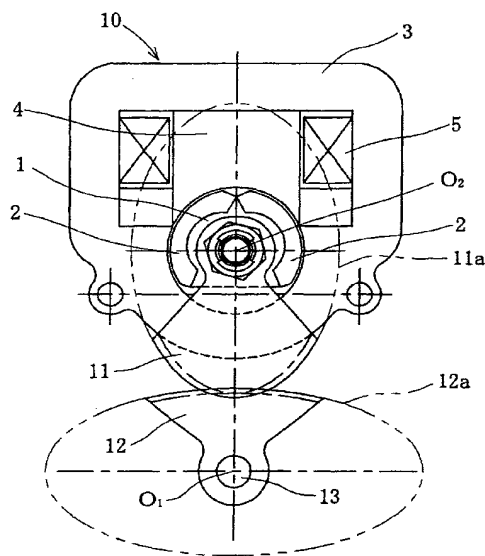
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(54) **DRIVE DEVICE WITH NON-CIRCULAR GEAR**

(57) The present driving apparatus comprises a torque motor (10) as a driving source, and a gear train which transmits rotation of a motor shaft (1) of the torque motor (10) to a driven shaft (13), wherein the gear train comprises a non-circular driving gear (11) which is attached to the motor shaft (1) and a non-circular driven gear (12) which is attached to the driven shaft (13) and engaged with the non-circular driving gear (11). When the motor shaft (1) rotates by supplying electric power to the torque motor (10), the rotation is transmitted to the non-circular driven gear (12) via the non-circular driving gear (11), so that the driven shaft rotates. Here, the torque of the torque motor (10) is transmitted to the driven shaft while it is increased or decreased in accordance with rotating positions. In this manner, the driving apparatus with a torque motor can provide desired torque at any rotating positions.

FIG. 1



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DescriptionTECHNICAL FIELD

5 [0001] The present invention relates to a driving apparatus utilized for rotating position control, such as an electronic control throttle body and the like.

BACKGROUND ART

10 [0002] Conventionally, a torque motor is used as an actuator for an electronic throttle body for an internal combustion engine. With this kind of motor, it is possible to magnetize a rotor itself. However, generally, a ring-shaped magnet is stuck on a rotor so that the rotating position is controlled in accordance with the changes of magnetic flux distribution generated by a coil and magnetic path.

15 [0003] With a throttle body, the rotating range of a throttle valve to open and close an intake passage is about 90 degrees. Therefore, all of ring-shaped magnet is not needed to drive and control within this range. Furthermore, the magnetic flux density of the magnet used for a rotor is high, resulting to be costly.

[0004] Consequently, as shown in Fig. 7, a torque motor with segment-type magnets was devised. In this figure, numeral 1 is a rotor, and two segment-type magnets 2, 2 cover about two thirds of the circumference of the rotor 1. A yoke 3 and a core 4 are disposed so that there is some air-gap to the circumference of the magnet 2. A coil 5 is disposed at the core 4. Numeral 6 is a default opening adjusting groove to set a stop position for the rotor when power is not applied.

[0005] With the abovementioned structure, when power is applied to the coil 5, the rotor 1 rotates about an axis O, and the throttle valve which is connected directly to the rotor 1 opens and closes. In this example, because magnets 2, 2 cover two thirds of the circumference of the rotor 1, its rotating angle is about 120 degrees. The rotating direction of the rotor 1 changes in accordance with the direction of the electric current which is passing through the coil 5.

25 [0006] With the abovementioned torque motor 10, the torque generated at the rotor 1 is not constant. As shown in Fig. 8, the torque is maximum at the center of the rotating position (the position where the boundary 2a between the two magnets 2, 2 overlap with a center line a of the torque motor, in Fig. 7). The torque becomes small as it rotates from this position to the left or the right, and the torque is minimum at both ends of the rotating range. This is a characteristic of the torque motor 10 which has the abovementioned structure, caused by magnetic circuit, such as magnetizing angles of the magnets, magnetic saturation and so on.

[0007] When this torque motor 10 is used for opening and closing a throttle valve, as shown in Fig. 8, a full-closed position (an idling position) and a full-open position of the throttle valve are in the vicinity of each end of the operating range respectively. Namely, they correspond to positions with small torque.

35 [0008] Here, in the small opening range including the full-closed position, quick response is needed because this range is used frequently. Furthermore, in this range, excess torque is needed to overcome throttle valve sticking problems which are easy to occur with icing or deposits.

[0009] The present invention is devised in consideration of the abovementioned situation, and the object is to provide a driving apparatus with a non-circular gear which can output required torque at a specific rotating position, such as the small opening range of the throttle body.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

45 [0010] To achieve the abovementioned object, the driving apparatus of the present invention comprises a torque motor as a driving source, and a gear train which transmits rotation of a motor shaft of the torque motor to a driven shaft, wherein the gear train comprises a non-circular driving gear which is attached to the motor shaft and a non-circular driven gear which is attached to the driven shaft and engaged with the non-circular driving gear.

[0011] Furthermore, the structure wherein the non-circular driving gear and/or the non-circular driven gear is a sector type gear having an oval shape, or the structure wherein the non-circular driven gear is disposed at a throttle shaft which controls intake-air amount to an internal combustion engine can be adopted.

50 [0012] The torque motor can be a motor which has a rotating range less than 360 degrees and which changes the torque in accordance with rotating angles.

[0013] With the driving apparatus of the present invention, when the torque motor rotates, the rotation is transmitted to the driven shaft via a gear train. The gear train includes the non-circular driving gear and the non-circular driven gear. Because of the engagement of these gears, the rotating velocity of the driven shaft is not constant, namely, rotating velocity of some ranges is high and that of other ranges is low. Here, the torque transmitted to the driven shaft in the high velocity range is smaller, and is larger in the low velocity range than the torque of the motor shaft. By designing the non-circular gear appropriately, it is possible to obtain desired torque at a desired rotating position, for

example, to obtain increased torque when the driven shaft is at the specific rotating position.

BRIEF DISCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 [0014]

Fig. 1 shows a structure of a driving apparatus with a non-circular gear of the present invention.

10 Fig. 2 explains how to determine pitch curves of a non-circular driving gear and a non-circular driven gear.

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing relations between a throttle shaft opening and throttle shaft torque.

15 Fig. 4 shows a main part of the second embodiment of the present invention showing shapes of the non-circular driving gear and a non-circular driven gear.

Fig. 5 is a diagram showing relations between a throttle shaft opening and a motor shaft opening of the second embodiment.

20 Fig. 6 is a diagram showing relations between a torque transmission rate and a motor shaft opening of the second embodiment.

Fig. 7 shows a structure of a conventional torque motor.

25 Fig. 8 is a diagram showing relations between a motor shaft opening and motor shaft torque of the conventional motor.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

30 [0015] An embodiment of the present invention is explained in the following in accordance with the drawings. Fig.1 shows a structure of a driving apparatus with a non-circular gear of the present invention. The structure of a torque motor 10 is the same as that of a conventional example. Conventionally, a throttle valve is connected directly to a rotor 1 as a motor shaft. In the present invention, a non-circular driving gear (hereinafter referred as a driving gear) 11 is attached to the rotor 1, and a non-circular driven gear (hereinafter referred as a driven gear) 12 which is engaged with the driven shaft, is attached to a throttle shaft 13. The present invention is characterized in that desired torque is obtained at a desired position by utilizing a non-circular gear.

35 [0016] The driving gear 11 is a sector type gear which pitch curve consists of a part of a vertically oriented oval 11a. The driven gear 12 is a sector type gear which pitch curve consists of a part of a horizontally oriented oval 12a that is orthogonal to the oval 11a. As explained above, the embodiment of Fig. 1 adopts oval gears. However, non-circular gears are not limited to the oval gears 11, 12, and various pitch curves can be used.

40 [0017] Incidentally, in this specification, the "sector type gear" is not limited to a normal sector-shaped sector type gear which pitch curve consists of a segment of a circle. It means all the gears which pitch curve consists of various curves, such as an oval arc and so on, and which pitch curve is not closed as a tube shape.

[0018] Next is the explanation of how to determine the shape of a pitch curve of the non-circular gear, namely, the shape of the gear.

45 [0019] Fig. 2 explains how to determine the shapes of the pitch curves of a driving gear 11 and a driven gear 12. As shown in this figure, the center of the driving gear 11 is O2, the center of the driven gear 12 is O1, and both pitch curves of the driving gear 11 and the driven gear 12 are in contact with each other at point P. Then, if the driving gear 11 rotates clockwise (plus direction) by a small angle $d\theta_2$ and the driven gear 12 rotates counter-clockwise (minus direction) by $d\theta_1$, so that point P1 and point P2 are to be in contact with each other, following equations hold.

$$r_1 + r_2 = a \quad (1)$$

$$r_1 \cdot d\theta_1 = r_2 \cdot d\theta_2 \quad (2)$$

50 [0020] On the condition that $a=1$, r_1 and r_2 are given by the equation (1) and equation (2) as follows.

$$r1 = (-d\theta2/d\theta1) / \{1 - (d\theta2/d\theta1)\} \quad (3)$$

$$r2 = 1 / \{1 - (d\theta2/d\theta1)\} \quad (4)$$

[0021] Here, $-d\theta2/d\theta1$ represents an angular velocity ratio. Therefore, giving the angular velocity ratio to the equation (3) and equation (4), the radii $r1$, $r2$ of pitch circles at that angle are determined linearly.

[0022] Namely, following equations hold between torque $T(\theta1)$ of the torque motor 10 at the rotating angle $\theta1$, and torque $T(\theta2)$ which is transmitted to the driven gear.

$$\begin{aligned} T(\theta2) &= T(\theta1) \cdot (d\theta2 / d\theta1) \\ &= (r1/r2) \cdot T(\theta1) \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Given $T(\theta2)$, $r1$ and $r2$ can be determined by the equations (3) (4) and (5).

[0023] Consequently, by drawing a diagram in which desired torque $T(\theta2)$ is plotted for every opening between full-closed and full-open of a throttle valve, the pitch curves of the driving gear 11 and the driven gear 12 are obtained in accordance with the diagram.

[0024] When oval gears are adopted for the driving gear 11 and driven gear 12 as the embodiment of Fig. 1, relations between the throttle shaft opening and the throttle shaft torque are as shown in the diagram of Fig. 3. Specifically, maximum torque is obtained at the full-closed position where the maximum load may exist. The torque is maximum at the full-closed position, and gradually decreases toward the full-open position.

[0025] Fig. 4 shows a main part of the second embodiment of the present invention showing shapes of the driving gear 21 and a driven gear 22. The driving gear 21 is the gear of the rotor 1 side, and the driven gear 22 is the gear of the throttle shaft 13 side. In this figure, pitch curves 21a, 22a which are located at the left side of the center line are the same oval arcs as the pitch curves of the oval gears 11, 12 in Fig. 1. The pitch curves 21b, 22b at the right side of the center line are segments of circles. The portions of the oval gears 11, 12 are for a small opening range, and the portions of the circle gears are for a large opening range. In this embodiment, since sector type gears are adopted, pitch curves of the gears can be designed as desired as abovementioned.

[0026] Fig. 5 is a diagram showing relations between a throttle shaft opening and a motor shaft opening of the second embodiment. The motor shaft opens gradually when the throttle shaft opening is in a small opening range, and opens rapidly in a large opening range.

[0027] Fig. 6 is a diagram showing relations between a torque transmission rate and a motor shaft opening of the second embodiment. The transmission rate increases gradually when the motor shaft opening is in a small opening range, and the transmission rate is constant in a large opening range. Large torque is obtained when the throttle shaft is at the full-closed position, because the smaller the motor shaft opening is, the smaller the transmission rate is. In this embodiment, the torque increase effect by the oval gears is produced only in a small opening range of the throttle shaft, while normal driving by the circle gears is performed so that the torque is not increased or decreased in a large opening range of the throttle shaft.

[0028] Not shown in figures, instead of an oval gear, an eccentric gear which axis is off-centered to the axis of a circle gear can be used as a non-circular gear. In this case, forming the gear is easier than the case of the oval gear. Furthermore, it is certainly possible to adopt a sector type gear.

[0029] In the abovementioned embodiment, the driving gear 11 is attached to the rotor 1, and the driven gear 12 is attached to the throttle shaft 13. However, it is not limited to such a structure. For example, similar effects can be obtained even when normal circle gears are attached to the rotor 1 and the throttle shaft 13 between which a non-circular gear is disposed.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0030] The driving apparatus of the present invention comprises a torque motor as a driving source, and a gear train which transmits rotation of a motor shaft of the torque motor to a driven shaft, wherein the gear train comprises a non-circular driving gear which is attached to the motor shaft and a non-circular driven gear which is attached to the driven shaft and engaged with the non-circular driving gear. With this structure, the torque transmitted to the driven shaft can easily be increased or decreased to meet the requirement.

[0031] With the structure wherein either the non-circular driving gear or the non-circular driven gear is a sector type gear having an oval shape, it is possible to obtain various torque characteristics and to make the apparatus compact. With the structure wherein the non-circular driven gear is disposed at a throttle shaft which controls the intake-air amount to an internal combustion engine, it is possible to make the torque maximum in a small opening range including a full-closed position of a throttle valve.

Claims

1. A driving apparatus with a non-circular gear, comprising:

a torque motor as a driving source; and
a gear train which transmits rotation of a motor shaft of said torque motor to a driven shaft;

wherein said gear train comprises a non-circular driving gear which is attached to said motor shaft, and a non-circular driven gear which is attached to said driven shaft and engaged with said non-circular driving gear.

2. The driving apparatus with the non-circular gear according to claim 1, wherein said non-circular driving gear and/or said non-circular driven gear is a sector type gear having an oval shape.

3. The driving apparatus with the non-circular gear according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said non-circular driven gear is disposed at a throttle shaft which controls intake-air amount to an internal combustion engine.

FIG. 1

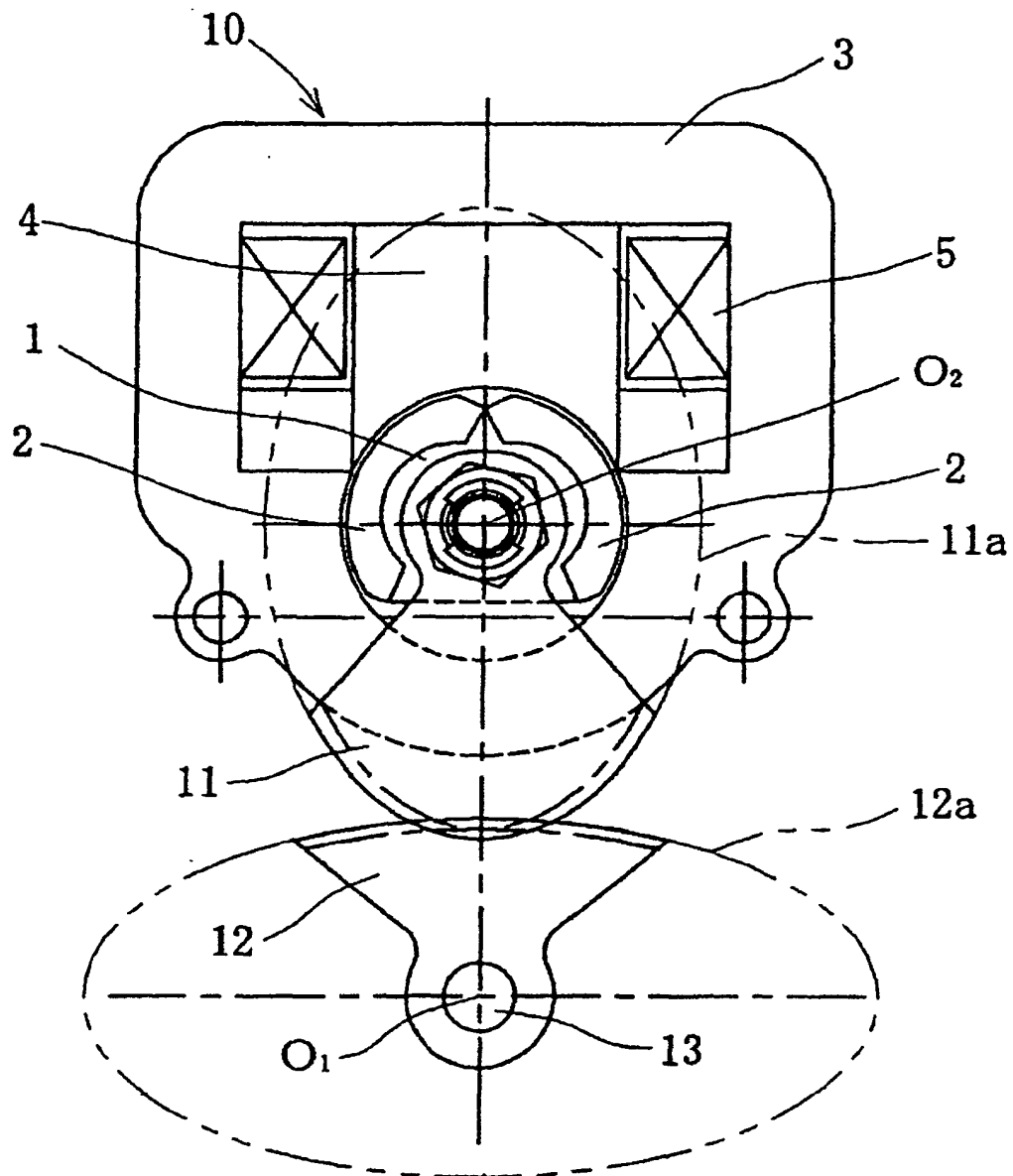


FIG.2

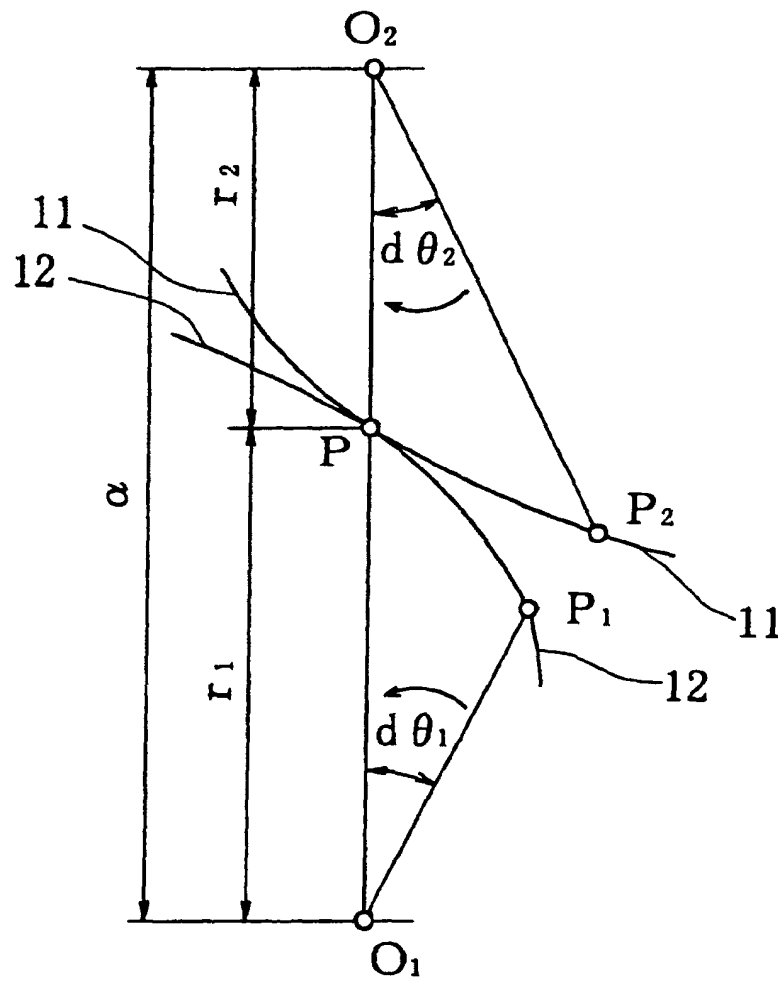


FIG.3

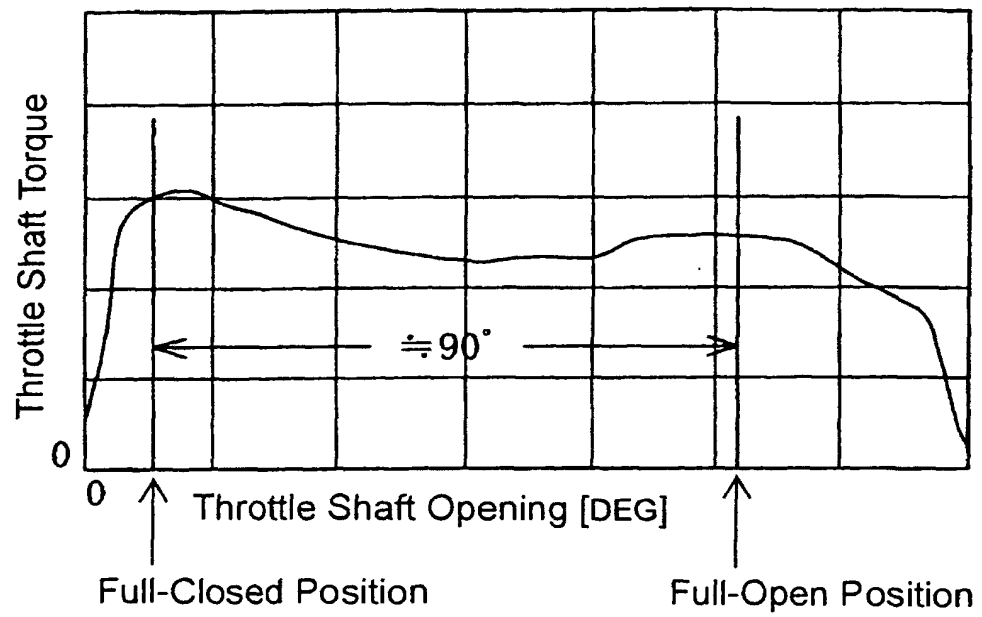


FIG.4

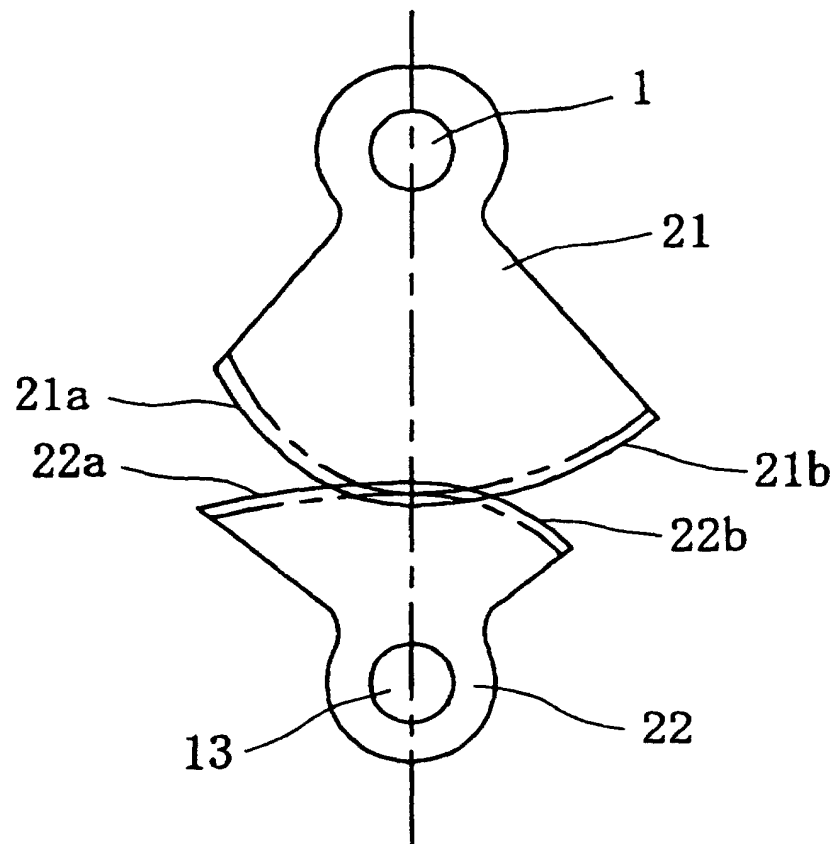


FIG.5

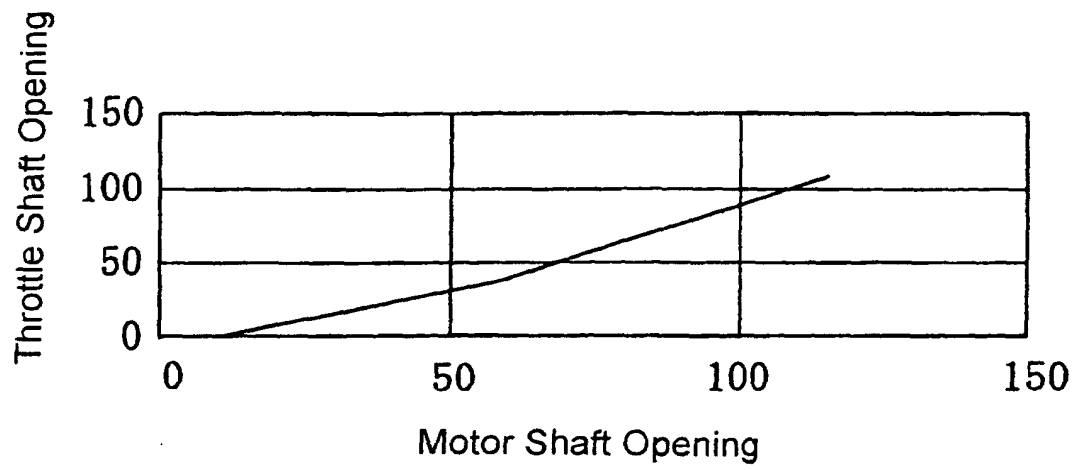


FIG.6

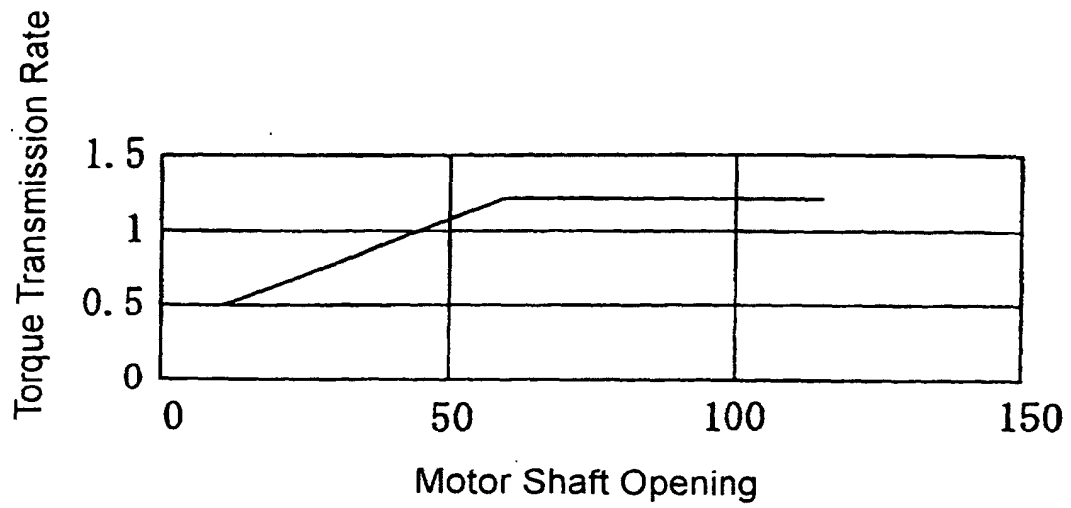


FIG. 7

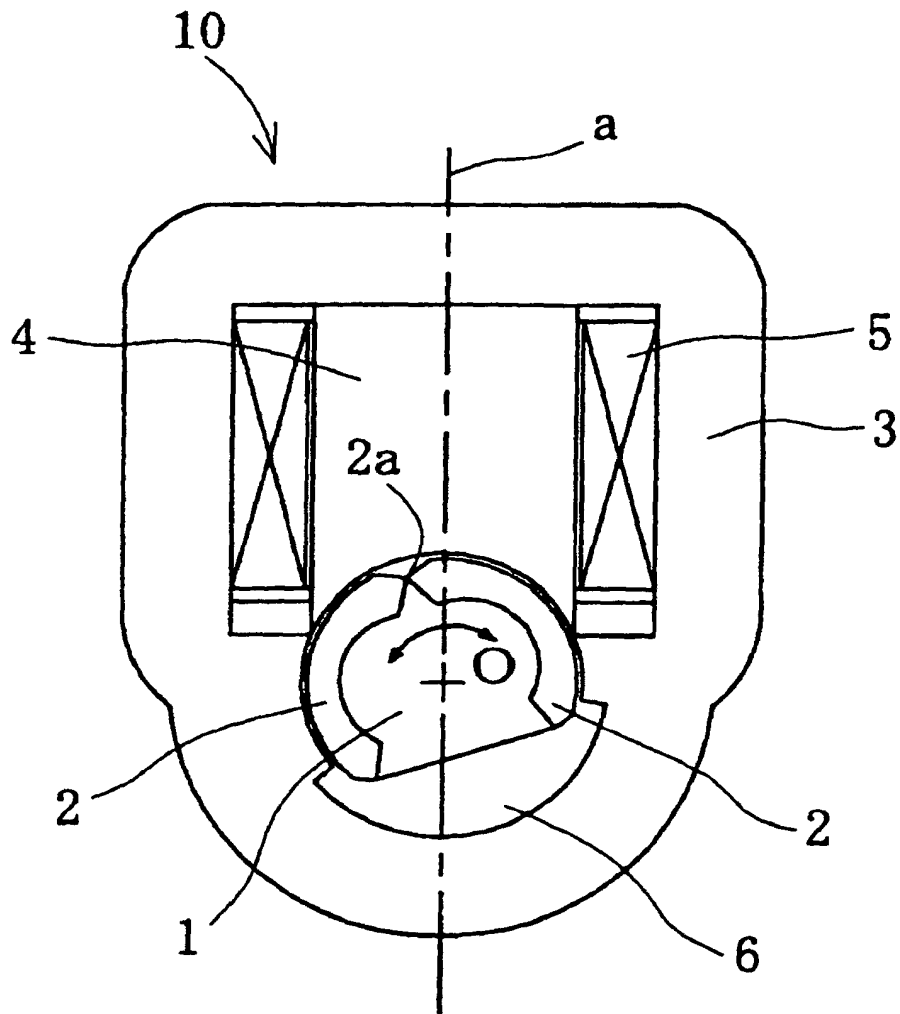
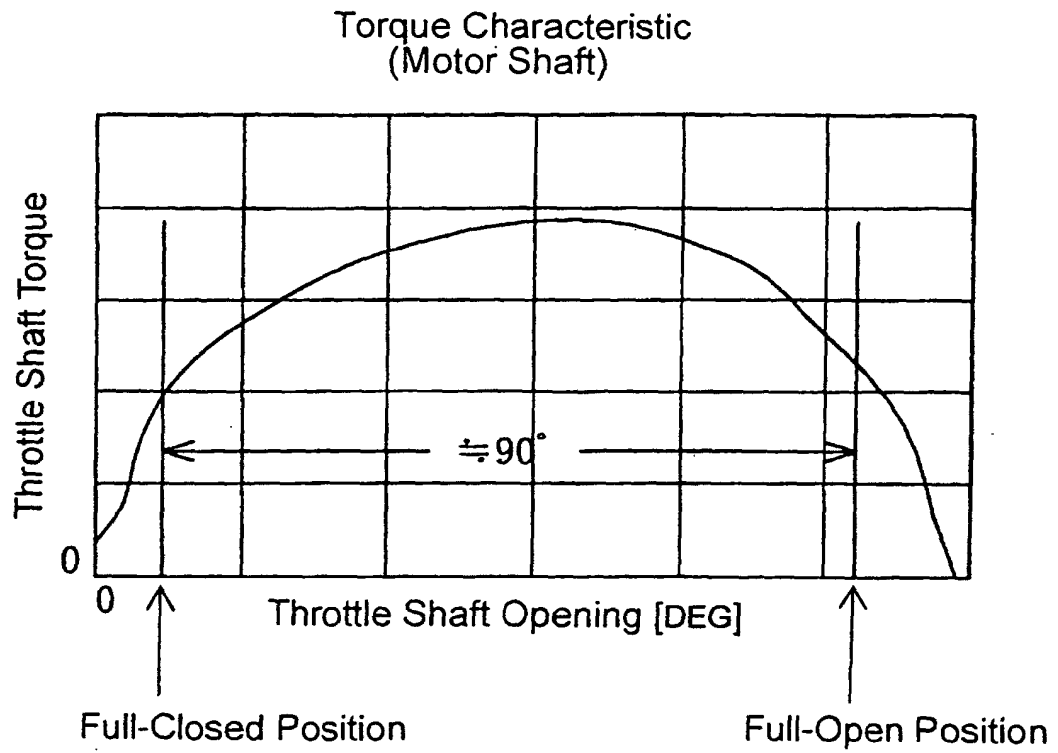


FIG.8



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP01/08055

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int.Cl ⁷ F02D11/10, 9/02, F16H35/02, H02K33/02		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Int.Cl ⁷ F02D9/00-11/10, F16H35/02, H02K7/116, 26/00, 33/02		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1922-1996 Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994-2001 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-2001 Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho 1996-2001		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP 11-266575 A (Denso Corporation), 28 September, 1999 (28.09.99), Full text; especially, Par. Nos. [0001] to [0006]; Figs. 1 to 4 (Family: none)	1-3
Y	JP 11-225465 A (Denso Corporation), 17 August, 1999 (17.08.99), Full text; Figs. 1 to 5 (Family: none)	1-3
Y	JP 2000-240474 A (Mikuni Corporation), 05 September, 2000 (05.09.00), Full text; Figs. 1 to 6 & EP 1031718 A2 & US 6247447 B1	1-3
Y	JP 58-091956 A (Hino Motors, Ltd.), 01 June, 1983 (01.06.83), Full text; Figs. 1, 2 (Family: none)	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family
Date of the actual completion of the international search 02 November, 2001 (02.11.01)		Date of mailing of the international search report 13 November, 2001 (13.11.01)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer
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